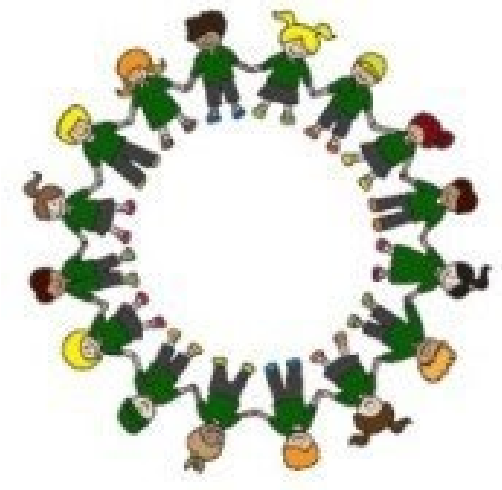
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SOUTHEND EAST COMMUNITY ACADEMY TRUST

Attendance and Punctuality Policy Appendix



Richmond Primary School

Review date	**October 2026**
Reviewed by	**Miss K Moneypenny**
Next review date	**October 2027**

Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

We aim to:

- set high expectations for attendance and punctuality while responding to individual circumstances;
- identify patterns of absence early and understand the reasons behind them;
- work in partnership with pupils and families to identify and remove barriers to attendance;
- consider SEND, medical needs, mental health, safeguarding, family circumstances and in-school barriers when responding to attendance concerns;
- use support and reasonable adjustments appropriately, while maintaining clear expectations for attendance; and
- work with the Local Authority and other professionals where additional or statutory support is required.

Attendance Targets

The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the Headteacher and The School Office Team to ensure we are in line with the National Average. The targets are challenging yet realistic and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

The school's attendance target for 2026-2027 is **to be in line with National attendance data for theacademic year.**

Why Attendance and Punctuality Matter?

Across one school year:

- Less than 5 days absence = 97.3% attendance
- 14 days absence (approx.) = 92.6% attendance
- 20 days absence (approx.) = 89.4% attendance
- 30 days absence (approx.) = 84.2% attendance

If a child reaches 80% attendance this means that they have missed approximately 39 days of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week.

1. Legislation and guidance

This appendix meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011,2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistentabsence threshold.

- Amendment to Southend City Council's Code of Conduct under the Provision of the Education(Penalty Notices) Regulations 2004 (September 2022)

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 The Academy Committee

The Academy Committee is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on atleast atermly basis. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

2.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this appendix at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

2.3 The School Office Team

The School Office Team:

- Takes calls / messages regarding absences and reports via the school attendance system
- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues Advises the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

2.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes,and submitting this information to the school office.

3. School procedures

All parents/carers on admission to the school sign a copy of the Home School Contract which statesthat 'parent/carers will ensure their children attend regularly and punctually'

4 Attendance

4.1 Attendance Registers

By law, all schools are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed onthis register.
The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day (AM) and once during the second session. (PM) It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which theentry was made.

Pupils at Richmond Avenue Primary School and Nursery must arrive in school by **8.45am** on eachschool day.

The register for the first session will be taken at **8.45am** and will be kept open until **9.15am.**
(This will be recorded using the code U and will cause attendance to fall).

The register for the second session (pm) for Reception/KS1 is 1pm and for KS2 is 1.30pm

4.2 Unplanned Absence

Parents/carers must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example,if their child is unable to attend due to ill health - from 8.00am that day.

The school can be informed of the absence by:

- Contacting the school office on 01702 292197 (lines open at 8am)
- email office@richmond.secat.co.uk
- Leave a voicemail on 01702 292197 and press 1 (available 24/7)

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern aboutthe authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents/carers to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this.

Please note:
Sickness &* Diarrhea *Bugs
The school has a 48-hour policy if your child has a sickness/diarrhea bug. This means your child can return to school 48 hours after the last episode and providing they are fully recovered. If your child has been sick due to, for example, eating too quickly or coughing, there is no reason for them to be absent from school.

4.3 Planned absence

For planned medical or dental appointments, parents/carers should notify the school in advance and show evidence of the appointment face to face or via email so the medical absence can be authorised. Wherever possible, appointments should be arranged outside the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school before and/or after the appointment wherever practicable and be absent for the minimum time necessary

Requests for other leave during term time should be made as far in advance as possible using the school's leave of absence procedure. Decisions will be made in accordance with the SECAT Attendance Policy. Please note, we will not authorise holidays in term time and you will be liable for fining (as per DfE guidance) for any absences due to holidays. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and Punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed (i.e. 9.15am) will be marked as **late (L)**.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will also be marked as **late (U)** and this will affectthe pupil's overall attendance. Children regularly arriving at school late will be monitored by the School Office Team who will contact parents/carers as regular lateness has a detrimental effect on their attendance.

4.5 Following Up Absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguardingaction is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identifythe correct attendance code to use.

- Parent/carers will be contacted on the day of the absence by the school by phone, textand email.
- Where no contact has been made with the parent/carer on the first day of absence theschool will mark this as an unauthorised absence.
- If the school are **concerned about the child's absence** and are unable to contact the

parent/carer, we may carry out a **home visit** and contact the children's emergency contact and/or **other professionals** or **contacts of the family** who we may reasonably expect to be able to advise us of the child's whereabouts.

4.6 Reporting to Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are informed of pupil's attendance using the school app (MCAS). This is available to all parents/carers. Parents/Carers can check pupil attendance on a daily basisthroughout the year. This includes information on overall attendance for the year and includes their absences/unauthorised absences that have been recorded.

4.7 Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent/carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent/carer writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parent/carers do not have this authority. Consequently, **not all absences supported by parent/carers will be classified as authorised**.

Unauthorised Absence
An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission ofthe school.

An absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with thesupport of parent/carer, such as a shopping trip or for a birthday.

An absence is unauthorised if a child has low attendance which is being monitored at Level 2 and medical proof is not supplied by the parent/carer to evidence the absence. Medical evidence could be seeing the prescribed medicine, seeing the child's prescription, a doctor'sor hospital letter or an appointment card etc. The school can provide the parent/carer with a medical form which can be completed and signed by a Doctor.

4.8 Approval for term-time absence

The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013.

Headteachers shall not grant any Leave of Absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application. Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time.

Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account thespecific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence can** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see section 4.2/4.3 for more details)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and WelshGypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees(occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

The Education Act 1996 makes it a criminal offence for a parent or carer to 'fail to secure their child's regular attendance at the school.'

If a parent/carer does need to request leave of absence for exceptional circumstances, theymust complete a form available from the School Office.

5 Strategies for Promoting Attendance

Richmond promotes the value of regular attendance through positive communication with pupils and families and through the wider life of the school. The school will keep its approaches to recognising attendance under review to ensure that they are inclusive and do not disadvantage pupils whose absence is linked to disability, medical needs or other circumstances outside their control.

Attendance improvement and engagement may be recognised alongside strong attendance, where appropriate.

- Weekly celebratory assembly to reward pupils regarding attendance
- Attendance 'Super heroes'
- Half termly class attendance prizes
- Use of house points and Dojos on a daily basis

6 Attendance Monitoring

Attendance and punctuality are monitored regularly at individual pupil, group, year and whole-school level.

Attendance information is considered alongside other relevant information so that patterns and emerging concerns can be identified early.

Relevant attendance information will be shared with appropriate school leaders, including the Headteacher, attendance staff, SENCo/Inclusion Lead, DSL team and Pupil Premium lead, where this supports effective identification, intervention and review.

Parents/carers can view attendance information through MCAS. School communication will aim to be personalised and, wherever possible, will explain the impact of absence in terms of learning time, relationships and school experiences missed rather than relying solely on a percentage.

Level 1 Absence -

Below 95% attendance will trigger a Level 1 letter. This summarises attendance and absences and sets clear expectations of improvements needed to parents / carers.

Level 2 Absence -

Following Level 1, if attendance continues to drop the following month a Level 2 letter will sent out inviting parents into a meeting to discuss attendance, absences and reasons to ensure parents/carers are supported whilst expectations are clear. This may be followed up by a second Level 2 meeting if needed.

IF there is no improvement over a six-week period from these meetings, a Notice to Improve letter can be sent. The school at this time can also request to issue penalty notices for absences / irregular attendance.

Next Steps –

If improvements in attendance are still not seen, a PPM may take place with the Local Authority. If there is no improvement beyond this stage, the Local Authority can take the parents to court due to high pupil absence.

Supporting pupils returning after absence

Following a lengthy, unavoidable or otherwise significant period of absence, Richmond will consider what support is needed for a successful return. This will be based on the pupil's individual circumstances rather than a standard response.

Support may include a planned welcome back, pupil and parent/carer discussion, a named adult or check-in, curriculum catch-up or access support, reasonable adjustments, pastoral/SEND support and an agreed review point. Where appropriate, a written reintegration plan will set out agreed actions and responsibilities.

Supporting pupils with SEND, medical needs and other barriers to attendance

Richmond recognises that pupils with SEND, physical or mental ill health, or other complex needs may experience additional barriers to attendance. Attendance concerns for these pupils will not be considered in isolation from their identified or emerging needs.

Where appropriate, the school will:

- work with the pupil and family to understand the barrier to attendance and listen to their views;
- involve the SENCo/Inclusion Lead and other relevant staff;
- consider reasonable adjustments and changes to provision where an in-school barrier has been identified;
- review relevant ISP, EHCP, medical, pastoral or support plans;
- seek advice or support from relevant external professionals and services;
- develop an individual attendance or reintegration plan where this would support successful attendance; and
- where a pupil has an EHCP and attendance is falling, or barriers relate to the pupil's needs, work with and inform the Local Authority in line with the SECAT Attendance Policy.

Absence due to physical or mental illness will be managed in line with the SECAT Attendance Policy. Medical evidence will not be requested unnecessarily. Where evidence is reasonably required, this will be considered proportionately and in accordance with the Trust policy.

Working with pupils, families and external agencies

We aim to work with families early and constructively. Attendance meetings should provide an opportunity to listen to and understand barriers, explain the support available, agree actions and review the impact of support already in place.

Where additional help is required, Richmond may work with the Local Authority, health professionals, SEND services, Early Help, social care or other relevant agencies. Information will be shared in accordance with safeguarding, data protection and statutory requirements.

6.2 Persistent Absence

Richmond's graduated response to attendance concerns

Richmond uses a graduated, individualised response rather than viewing a percentage in isolation:

- Identify – notice emerging patterns of absence or lateness and consider relevant attendance data and contextual information.
- Understand – speak with the pupil and family to understand the reasons for absence and identify barriers, including any in-school barriers.
- Support – agree proportionate actions, support and reasonable adjustments. This may include a named adult, check-ins, pastoral or SEND support, referrals, attendance support or an individual attendance/reintegration plan.
- Review – monitor whether agreed actions are reducing barriers and improving attendance, and adapt support where necessary.
- Escalate – where support is unsuccessful, inappropriate or is not engaged with, consider further intervention in accordance with the SECAT Attendance Policy and Local Authority processes.

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school. Severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more. Pupils approaching or meeting these thresholds will receive particular attention so that barriers and appropriate next steps can be considered promptly.

7 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police. The decisionon whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiablereason.

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice